

City Council

Study Session Summary

October 9, 2019
Library Meeting Room
951 Spruce Street
6:45 PM

Mayor Muckle called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

City Council Present: Mayor Robert Muckle
Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lipton
Councilmember Jay Keany
Councilmember Chris Leh
Councilmember Susan Loo
Councilmember Dennis Maloney
Councilmember Ashley Stolzmann

Staff Present: Heather Balser, City Manager
Megan Davis, Deputy City Manager
Kevin Watson, Finance Director
Kurt Kowar, Public Works Director
Emily Hogan, Assistant to the City Manager

Discussion – Louisville Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study

Lori Sherwood from VantagePoint Solutions presented the findings and recommendations from the Broadband Feasibility Study.

General agreement that service to home was not of interest – don't have the existing infrastructure that other cities have had and very costly. Not necessary given overall satisfaction of customers with existing service.

Council discussed and asked questions regarding middle mile infrastructure. The City's current loop of fiber connecting the city facilities is what would be considered middle mile or the backbone broadband infrastructure for the City. It's a horseshoe, not a complete ring. It's not robust in that it has enough fiber to meet our current needs but no room for growth/expansion within the current conduit – it is already fully utilized. Discussion about ownership of existing middle mile – BVSD and Zayo along with the City, and the right of way. Lori responded to questions about fiber vs. wifi infrastructure, and indicated that both are needed. The fiber will continue to be necessary even after ongoing improvements such as 5G – fiber will always be the key ingredient in expanding and improving all services.

City of Louisville

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Request for a bulleted list of what we own and what we don't on the map on page 45.

Council expressed interest in expanding the middle mile/backbone for the City. They would like to see more analysis about what specifically is needed first, so that they can make strategic and phased improvements to our broadband infrastructure. This could be done in phases – look at opportunities when infrastructure improvements occur to get in and replace/expand fiber count. The plan doesn't go as far as providing engineering plans and costs. Perhaps need to start budgeting for this in 2019 so that we can start to understand the needs and costs. Next step would be a more detailed look at what's on the ground, validate the study, determine the exact needs and costs, and develop an engineering plan. Lori will check in with the VantagePoint Solutions engineering team and find out what the costs of this type of plan would be.

Discussion about improving wifi in downtown areas and other central areas like parks, events, etc. Have there been complaints, is that something that businesses have indicated they need for customers? Makes sense to diversify and have both improved Wifi and fiber, but also is kind of a “perk.”

Positive feedback on the report. Council liked the detailed background and definitions, and the clearly laid out options. Liked the mail-survey for community feedback. Best Practices and Policies. There was a desire to take more time to look closely at the ideas laid out in the report, have staff consider what's currently in place and what the opportunities are, and how they coincide with existing policies and practices: Where do our ordinances align, and where don't they? What would it take to implement some of these strategies? Request to include this as a possible item for the 2019 workplan process.

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**Discussion – Roles and Responsibilities of the Utility and Finance Committee:
Advanced Agenda:**

There was discussion about the desire to have some information that is currently reviewed through utility and finance committee go to all Council members. Information like sales tax data and utility financial reports would be useful to all Council, especially during budget discussions. Discussion about hosting quarterly or biannual utility and finance meetings with Council, via a study session or special meeting. Hard for staff to have to present and re-present the same information multiple times, and have input and discussion in multiple forums about things. If there are truly things that warrant the broader discussion, committees and staff should recognize that and direct the conversation to Council vs. committees.

Council had additional discussion about whether having committees is beneficial if information is going to all members. Acknowledged that there is some benefit in having a group to pre-discuss certain issues, specific to one area, and to make

recommendations or provide input on their thoughts to Council before making decisions. Some feel that Council can't have all the information on every single issue, so having committees helps build experts that can then inform the broader conversation by providing context and perspective.

How can we do both? There are advantages to doing committee work, but there are some issues that may warrant deeper conversation, and we could have some sort of check with each committee issue that is more substantive than a report. Suggestion is to have each committee discuss what they do that can be accomplished just by committee, vs. full Council, and what they recommend would be beneficial for full Council to understand in order to make decisions on an issue. Recommendation to have two Council meetings/Study sessions each year, one in the spring and one in the fall, which would help lay the groundwork for budget discussions, and then update/inform on relevant budget issues.

Advanced Agenda:

Budget – Will the info presented on Friday, October 12, need to make some decisions on outstanding issues, and then will make wholesale changes that will come back in the next version.

Is Council interested in having an advanced agenda item regarding the RTD 228 Extension Service? Yes, if it's possible to have a timely conversation about it. The RTD decision will be made at RTD next Tuesday, so further discussion may not be necessary/possible.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45

*Submitted by – Megan Davis
October 16, 2018*